

Pollution Complaint Clearinghouse

AUGUST 2000 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the eighth Pollution Complaint Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) executive summary for the year 2000 provided to IDEM staff based on 8 months of complaint tracking across the program areas. The primary objectives of the Clearinghouse are to establish a management system for handling multimedia or multiagency citizen complaints, establish agency standards for responding to citizen complaints, establish a data-gathering mechanism for quantifying citizen complaints agency-wide in an effort to better gauge IDEM's responsiveness to complaints and to identify trends or issues as they relate to complaints, utilizing innovative solutions where possible. The purpose of this summary is to offer a brief overview of the trends or issues as they relate to the complaints that have been received by IDEM beginning January 1, 2000 - August 31, 2000. An executive summary will be provided for all future monthly summaries.

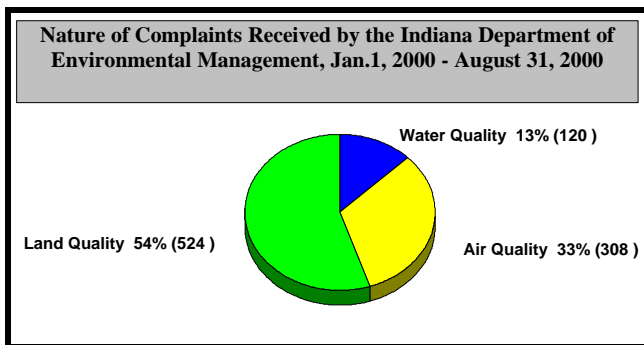


Figure 1

Figure 1 breaks down all complaints received into three categories: land quality, air quality and water quality. Land Quality complaints were the most numerous, followed by Air Quality and Water Quality. The total number of complaints received to date is 952.

The nature of complaints received by IDEM can be organized into 25 categories of complaints. Of these 25 categories of complaints, the top 7 comprise 60% (570) of all complaints received to date. **Figure 2** illustrates the number and type of the top 7 pollution complaints received.

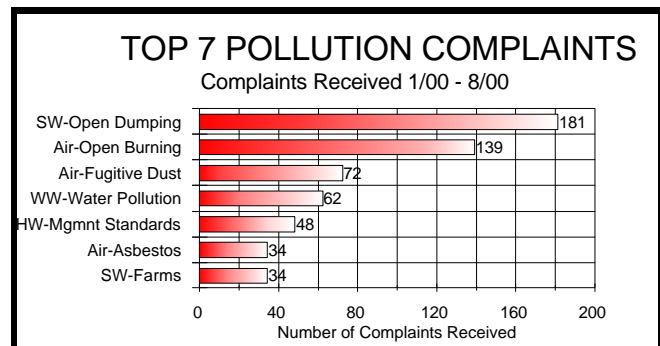


Figure 2

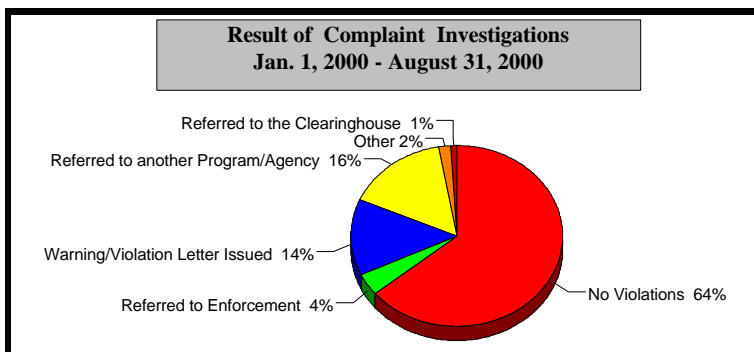


Figure 3

Figure 3 displays the results of all complaint investigations. 64% (421) of all complaints investigated by IDEM staff since January 1, 2000 were reported as "No Violations." Approximately 14% (90) of all complaint investigations resulted in the issuance of either a "Warning Letter" or a "Violation Letter." A total of 26 complaints were referred to the Office of Enforcement at the conclusion of the complaint investigation.

IDEM received a total of **952** complaints within the first 8 months of the year. **Figure 4** reflects the number of complaints per regional office. The bulk of complaints occurred within the region of the main office in Indianapolis, followed by the Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), the Northern Regional Office (NRO) and the Northwest Regional Office (NWRO).

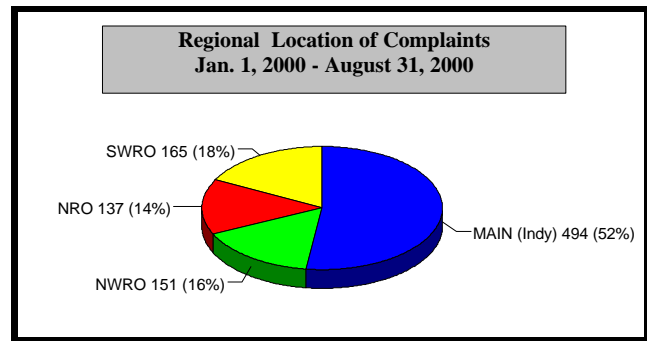


Figure 4

In order to gauge IDEM's responsiveness to complaints, program areas and regional offices track the number of days to respond to complaints and the number of days to report the results of the complaint investigation as they occur within their respective programs and geographical areas of the state. **Figure 5** indicates the regional complaint response information the Clearinghouse has collected since January 1, 2000. Since all complaints received within a given month are not necessarily acted upon in the same month in which they were received and communication lags often exist between inspectors in the field, the regional offices and the Indianapolis office, a conclusion can not yet be firmly established in regards to the responsiveness of regional offices.

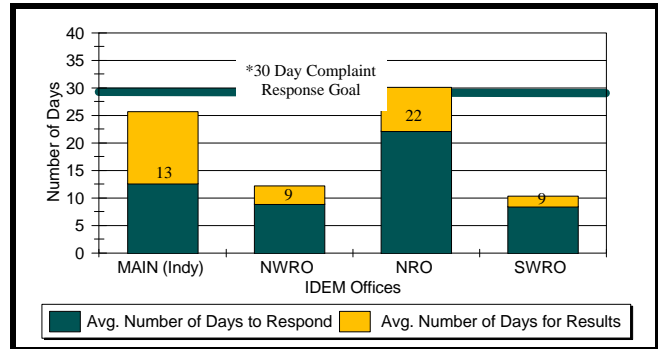


Figure 5

The program areas within the main and regional offices take a variety of steps to handle a complaint once the complaint is received. The exact order of these steps depends on which program is required to respond. Furthermore, the criteria for action is a matter of program specific policies concerning priorities and resources.